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Arab Opinion Leaders' Attitudes and Perceptions towards the Coverage of Da'esh News by Arab and non-Arab TV News Services

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This study aims to Arab opinion leaders' attitudes and perceptions towards the coverage of Da'esh actions by Arab and non-Arab TV news services, thus, by investigating the perception of Da'esh actions provided by Arab and non-Arab TV services. Data were collected from 1,330 participants across 19 Arab countries, with a probability sample due to the difficulties to gather comprehensive information from the sample that targets Arab opinion leaders. The findings of the study show that Arab and Western news channels present 2.7 per cent of their news bulletins about Da'esh. The variable "very big" in the first place by 60.1 per cent, and the "big" variable occupied second place by 15.5 per cent, while the interest rate for the weak variable came in last place with 10 per cent. The majority of respondents trust the news of Arab and Western news channels about Da'esh. In the "yes" answer, 87.9 per cent pointed to Arab channels, and 84.4 per cent for

Keywords: Opinion leaders, Da'esh, news coverage, terrorism, attitudes

Since the Arab uprisings in 2011, the Arab world has witnessed intensive global and regional events with catastrophic consequences for the region, such as 45 per cent of terrorist attacks in the Arab countries, and more than 75 per cent of the world's refugees came from Arab countries, in addition to more than 1.4 million Arabs dead and wounded over the past six years (Kassab, 2016).

These numerous events and the role played by some terrorist organizations require intensive news coverage. Da'esh, however, received the largest share. Al-Majdhoub (2016) indicates that within one month CNN covered the news about Da'esh (including the Islamic State IS), with a total of 149 news stories (83.05 per cent). The news stories were mainly about these terrorist organizations and their anti-human value actions, such as beheading, burning, and abusing the victims. Qudah, Ziani, Alrajehi and Al-Matrouk (2016) indicate that the majority of respondents (84.5 per cent) considered Da'esh a terrorist organization; and that the execution of hostages is a very horrific terrorist action (95.6 per cent). In addition, terrorist organizations have adopted social media, such as YouTube, to document their violent actions, which have attracted great coverage by the masses (Farwell, 2014; Byron, 2015; Hawkins, 2016; & Toksbaby, 2017). Not only have such organizations created thousands of websites to publish their news and online recruitment (Toksbaby, 2017), but several Arab and foreign news services have used news and information published on these sites, which has made such organizations more popular.

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The danger of these organizations' actions lies in the magnitude of damage they inflicted on the infrastructure of the countries where they are deployed. For example, it has been statistically indicated that the war on terrorism over the last six years has affected the loss of infrastructure in the amount of approximately \$400 billion as stated by Human Rights Watch, 2017.

The importance of this study lies in its unique topic which has not been profoundly investigated. This study, therefore, was designed to shed new light on the perception of Arab viewers regarding Da'esh actions by looking at the attitudes of religious and political leaders, journalists, and other key Arab figures towards news coverage of terrorist organizations by Arab and non-Arab TV services. It also highlighted the size of tragedies the *War on Terror* has caused, especially the humanitarian concerns, by looking at the size of brutality committed by Da'esh groups in order to win the viewers' attentions towards the war on terror and how they were presented in news bulletins by analyzing data gathered from 19 Arab countries on the objectivity and neutrality in transferring Da'esh news.

Based on all these data, this study intended to answer a number of questions about the attitudes of the religious, political, and media leaders, and journalists, writers, and political analysts towards the news coverage of terrorist organizations by Arab and Western channels. This study aims to highlight the attitudes of opinion leaders towards the news coverage of the Arab and Western channels of Da'esh various violent actions through news bulletins.

The Study Problem

Recently, there has been a proliferation of conflict areas between countries' military institutions and multi-ethnic terrorist organizations, most notably Da'esh which has military, ideological, and religious armaments (under the guise of the Islamic religion). These conflicts have taken many forms and have resulted in the creation of new methods of torture, murder, and self-marketing for several purposes (Hawkins, 2016). Hamblen (2017) indicates that there is a psychological effect from what appears in the media, news, and television on viewers. In addition, terrorist media affects some by considering their souls as weapons—by committing suicide operations—without regard to human or religious values.

The study focused primarily on the attitudes of opinion leaders towards the news coverage of Arab and Western channels of Da'esh news, as well as the global coverage of the war on the terrorist organizations, and the war of the regular armies in Iraq and Syria on terrorist organizations. At the same time, the study highlighted the size of tragedies the war on terror caused, especially humanitarian concerns, by showing the size of brutal actions committed by terrorist organizations through displaying them on the news bulletins, in order to win the viewers' attention towards the war on terror.

Importance of the Study

This study, *The Attitudes of Opinion Leaders towards the Coverage of the Arab and Western Channels of Da'esh News*, the researchers believe, is probably the first in Arab countries. The study is important as it explores the views of political professors, religious figures, communication professors, journalists, writers, and analysts from 19 Arab countries on objectivity and neutrality in transmitting Da'esh news. The study is also important as the population belongs to Arab elites and opinion leaders.

Literature Review

Dependency on the Media Theory

This study is based on the Media Dependency theory. Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur (1976) put forward their theory of the public's dependency on media, as it is a distinguished application of the influence of traditional media on recipients. The idea is based on the theory assumption that people in a modern society rely on the media to understand the world around them. The relationship of the recipients' dependence on the media relies on two basic pillars: (i) focuses on the need of the public for information that satisfies and meets their needs and achieves their objectives; and (ii) the media system is based on a system employed by the recipient to meet their needs from the media (Abdul Hamid, 2010). Baum and Potter (2008) explain that the theory refers to a fundamental relationship between the media organization, the public, and social system. Here the study reviews literature on public opinion and foreign policy. The theory assumption is the belief that people learn from their practical experience and that the public depends on the media to collect information they need, and therefore, increases the use of the media by the public.

DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach (1989) argues that the theory of dependency on media stemmed from an ecological model, where the public looked at a complex set of links on the Internet and mass media. The community has different components that interact with each other and each link in the chain forms a separate entity, all come together to form a reliable source for the public to obtain more information. The audience, however, has different goals and want the media to achieve satisfaction by relying on them for information. Makkawi and Elsayed (2003) state that the basic rules underlying the dependency theory are the objectives for individuals, groups, and organizations to achieve their personal and social objectives by relying on resources controlled by other individuals, groups, or organizations and vice versa.

While Abdul Hamid (2010) indicates that individuals and organizations usually rely on different resources to achieve their goals. The media, here, is seen as a social system through which individuals seek to achieve their objectives. The media controls three types of information sources: collection, coordination, and revision to appear in a certain way, before publishing and distributing to an unlimited audience. The hypotheses of this theory assume that the degree of public dependency on the media has a directly positive correlation with the ability of the media to meet individual's needs as much as possible (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976). Therefore, the individual or community will rely heavily on the medium to meets its needs and achieve its objectives. The degree of dependency on the media is also directly correlated to the social stability during the period of radical social change such as wars and terrorist operations.

In this process, people need to re-evaluate their values, beliefs and practices, and consider other new options. As such, the degree of dependency heavily increases because of the need for strong advice. Therefore, the media becomes a pivotal point for getting information to direct its audience (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976). If the situation is stabilized, the public would be less dependent on the media and the dependency will decline. Nevertheless, DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach (1989) assume that the public is seen as an active element in the communication process. The public normally chooses the ideal media based on an individual's needs and other external factors such as cultural, social, political, and economic conditions. This means that the individual would be less dependent on the media if there were more alternatives that could meet his needs. The theory also assumes that the psychological characteristics of the individual may also determine the

level of dependence on the media, as the media have the ability and power to establish a dependent relationship among the target audience, and therefore, the public uses this power to achieve their objectives.

Abdul Hmaid (2009) classifies that some of the most important effects resulting from the public's dependency on the media such as cognitive and emotional influences. The former effects are built on trend formation, prioritization, and beliefs and values, while the latter is built on messages that are exchanged between individuals in one category of the network sites. These messages can support feelings of anxiety and fear, which can be seen in periods of stress and crises. The third element is behavioral influences, which are built or result from the cognitive and affective influences. They contribute to the affirming roles, avoidance, and effectiveness or ineffectiveness as a result of trends that contribute to knowledge and feelings and its formation and influence.

It can be said, as a result, that the advantages of the dependency theory on the media in this study lies in the aim of this study to investigate the relationship between Arab public opinion leaders and the media, by looking at how the public affects the media and the social system as a whole, especially in crises coverage, wars and disasters. The theory also helps to understand the way that Arab leaders rely on the media to follow up the news regarding Da'esh actions on Arab and foreign TV services in terms of emotional, cognitive, and behavioral influences (Al-Faqih, 2002).

Framing Theory

The Framing theory was also used in this study, which focuses on the communicators who determine what, how, and when to publish news information (McLeod, Scheufele, & Moy, 1999). The theory is also theoretically linked to the Gatekeeper theory, where the communicators form the frame and contexts of knowledge to the public who is influenced by what is exposed to them. Goffman (1974) introduced the Framing theory in media studies by defining framing as the principles of organization that control the events and participation in these events.

Ditlin (1980) states that media framing has made the world beyond the direct experience appear "natural", while Entman (1993) defines framing as identifying certain aspects of reality related to an event or issue and making it more silent in the media. Lyenger and Simon (1993) classify that media framing is an episodic frame, which describes events and issues raised through specific events, while the thematic frame presents issues/events generally and especially in context. McLeod et al. (1999) indicate that framing research can be classified into two elements: (i) relates to framing studies (e.g., media vs. audience); while (ii) relates to framing operation (e.g., independent or dependent variables). McCombs and Ghanem (2001) state that "frames are usually holistic traits, often containing a mixture of cognitive and emotional elements" (p. 67).

Furthermore, De Vreese (2005) points out that framing is a useful theory when it comes to issues related to how to understand the "role of the media in political life" (p. 97). In contrast, Tankard (2001) suggests that framing reflects the richness of media discourse and the subtle differences related to how to present a particular subject in different ways. The current study aims to explore such matter, which related to two media systems where media researchers linked framing to changes in attitude and behavior. De Vreese (2005) also indicates framing as "emphasizing the emergence of different aspects of the subject" (p.53). McQuail (2010) classifies framing studies into two main elements: how the news is framed and how the public is influenced. McQuail (2010) adds that framing is "a way of

giving some comprehensive interpretations of elements isolated from the reality" (p. 557). Chong and Druckman (2007) explain that "framing refers to the process by which people develop a particular perception of an issue or reorient their thinking about it" (p. 104). They add that framing in media studies is to monitor an issue from a variety of perspectives, and consider that it affects various assessments or moral ideas in contrast.

Framing Terrorism

Al Zahm (2006) found that the majority of respondents indicated that raping and taking women captives as inhumane and anti-religious action increased (93.3 per cent), followed by killing of prisoners and hostages is terrorism and war crimes (91.8 per cent), cities destruction and economic resources were seen as crimes and terrorism (89.8 per cent), and defending homelands is a heroic action (89.6 per cent), suicide attacks against the military is considered martyrdom received (64.6 per cent). The study also found that the majority of respondents considered that presenting image for executing civilians/hostages by Da'esh was a very unacceptable act (95.6 per cent), followed by a sense of shame and disgrace caused by these acts which are far from human dignity (91.1 per cent). The results also indicate that the organization's members are cutting off the heads of hostages as a result of ignorance and backwardness (93.1 per cent).

Qudah and Khamis (2008) conducted a study entitled *The University Youth Image of Al Jazeera and Al Jazeera International*. The most important results of this study proved that interest in news under the variable "mediocre" came in first place with 31 per cent, and under the variable "big" 13.6 per cent. Results also indicated a significant statistical relationship at $\alpha=0.01$ between nationality and confidence. In addition, results also showed that there is no relationship between age and watching foreign stations.

Al-Mawafa (2010) conducted a study on Jordanian public views towards terrorism issues broadcasted by *Al Jazeera* and *Al Arabiya* TV news services and found that there were several statistical differences between male and female regarding news coverage and the tendency of terrorist activities broadcast by *Al Jazeera* TV in favor of males. Results also showed significant statistical differences for the age group 50 years and above. The study also showed significant differences between the Jordanian public trends towards terror issues broadcast by *Al Jazeera* and *Al Arabiya* satellite channels in favor of *Al Jazeera*. Results also showed significant differences at ($\alpha=0.05$) for the scientific qualification in favor of the males.

Alshami (2014) studied the elite's attitudes towards the ethics of TV coverage of the Yemeni youth uprising 'Intifada' and found that those who had exposure to media news covering the Intifada were affected more by the news coverage than others. The speed of issues coverage, follow up of developments, regular coverage, and confidence in the media coverage were the reasons for following up news media coverage. The most important results showed that regular exposure to media and mass communication to follow up on the news of the Yemeni youth uprising against irregular exposure; the mean of the first (the regular exposure) was 78.9 per cent of the total percentage of the elite, while "always" ranked second (the irregular exposure) at 16.7 per cent. Results also showed that 4.4 per cent is the mean of those who are not exposed to media. The non-government Yemeni Suhail channel was ranked third, with 58.9 per cent. And of three channels: *Al Jazeera* came in the first ranking, followed by *Al Arabiya* TV and then the BBC, by 67.3 per cent, 63.6 per cent and 58.9 per cent, respectively. Results also revealed reasons for exposure and speed in showing the events of the Intifada by (92.5 per cent), following its development (85 per cent), and

regular coverage of its events by (82 per cent); and realizing methods of dealing with Intifada events by (80 per cent). Confidence in the media, however, was at 29.9 per cent. The Arab satellite channels dominated the information scene.

Al-Majdhoub (2016) examined the framing of news coverage by CNN and *Al Jazeera* regarding ISIS issues in Iraq and Syria. The results of the study indicate that within one month CNN coverage of news of the state organization with articles and news stories amounted to 149 (83.05 per cent), while *Al Jazeera* covered 10 news stories, or 16.95 per cent. CNN has devoted a large number of news stories about the incidents of rupture of headings carried out by Da'esh between 2014 and 2015 with a total of 149 stories and reports (71.98 per cent). On the other hand, *Al Jazeera* accounted for 58 stories and reports (28.02 per cent).

Qudah et al. (2016) found that the majority of respondents named Da'esh as a terrorist group (84.8 per cent), followed by mental image associated with Da'esh actions (64.6 per cent). The highest of which is distortion and beheading which is contrary to highly standards and norms, followed by house demolition and displacement of people is terrorism (94 per cent). Violence against civilians was seen as terrorism by 93.8 per cent of respondents. The results also found that the majority of respondents (84 per cent) imagined ISIS as a terrorist group and its actions seen as terrifying actions including beheading which are contrary to human standards and norms, demolishing houses, forced displacement of people, violence against civilians, raping and kidnapping women, and killing prisoners and hostages. The results also indicated that beheading hostages by ISIS members was seen as a result of ignorance and backwardness.

Methodology

This research seeks to examine the objectivity and impartiality of Da'esh news on Arab and Western satellite channels. It is a systematic scientific effort that aimed at obtaining data about this matter to help understanding how viewers consider Da'esh activities.

The Sample

Because of the difficulty of creating a comprehensive and modern frame for the sample that includes opinion leaders, and due to the distribution of the study population to 19 Arab countries, and the difficulty in selecting a representative sample of the population, the researchers resorted to the selection of a probability sample representative of the study population. The researchers adopted the sample method available or appropriate by Wimmer and Dominick (2000). It is based on the method of selecting individuals who can represent the study population. The sample reached 1,330 individuals: opinion leaders (religious, political, and communication), as well as journalists, writers, and analysts, of various occupations and ages.

Participants

Data were collected from 1,330 participants across 19 Arab countries, with a probability sample (available or appropriate method) due to the difficulties to gather comprehensive information from the sample that targets Arab opinion leaders.

Measure

An online survey, *googlesurvey.com*, was developed containing 12 questions (e.g., yes/no and Likert-type scaling). Because the data were generated via online survey, the generalizability and findings of the study are limited to the participants who responded in this survey. The questionnaire instrument was developed as follows: Section 1 asked respondents to state their demographic elements including their age, gender, marital status, nationality, location of residency and education. Section 2 invited participants to provide their perceptions of Da'esh actions news.

Research Questions

This study aims to examine the Arab opinion leaders' attitudes and perceptions towards the coverage of Da'esh actions by Arab and non-Arab TV news services. In doing so, the following research questions underpinned the study:

- RQ1: How do respondents perceive Da'esh actions provided by Arab and non-Arab TV services?
- RQ2: To what extent do respondents trust news regarding Da'esh actions in Arab and non-Arab TV services?
- RQ3: What are the reasons for following Da'esh actions on Arab and non-Arab TV services?
- RQ4: Are there any distinctive demographic market differences and dependency on news coverage Da'esh actions on Arab and non-Arab TV services?
- RQ 5: Why do you follow-up the news of Da'esh on the Western news channel?
- RQ 6: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Arab satellite channels impartially and objectively cover Da'esh news?
- RQ 7: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Western satellite channels impartially cover Da'esh news?

Hypotheses

The hypotheses of this research were formatted as follows:

- H1:** There are significant statistical differences between sex and dependency on news of Arab satellite channels.
- H2:** There are significant statistical differences between sex and dependency on news of Western satellite channels.
- H3:** There are significant statistical differences between nationality and dependency on news of Arab satellite channels.
- H4:** There are significant statistical differences between nationality and dependency on news of Western satellite channels.
- H5:** There are significant statistical differences between age and dependency on news of Arab satellite channels.
- H6:** There are significant statistical differences between age and dependency on news of Western satellite channels.
- H7:** There are significant statistical differences between profession and dependency on news of Arab satellite channels.
- H8:** There are significant statistical differences between profession and dependency on news of Western satellite channels.

- H9:** There are significant statistical differences between place of residence and dependency on news of Arab satellite channels.
- H10:** There are significant statistical differences between place of residence and dependency on news of Western satellite channels.
- H11:** There are significant statistical differences between social status and dependency on news of Arab satellite channels.
- H12:** There are significant statistical differences between social status and dependency on news of Western satellite channels.

Study Sample and Population

The study sample consisted of (1,330) religious men, political science professors, journalists, communication professors, writers, and political analysts, with 61.6 per cent of being males and 38.4 per cent being females. Their age was ranged from less than 35 years old (30.7 per cent), those aged 46-55 (27.6 per cent) and those aged 61 and over (6.3 per cent). Their profession was journalists (29.5 per cent), media professors (21.1 per cent), political professors (18.4 per cent) and religionist (15.3 per cent). 77.3 per cent of the respondents were married, while 22.2 per cent were single and 0.5 per cent were divorced. 69.7 per cent of respondents own houses, while 30.3 per cent were living in rented accommodation. The majority of respondents 86.1 per cent lived in urban area and 13.7 per cent lived villages or rural areas. Respondents’ nationality ranged from Egyptian (16.9 per cent), Libyan (14.8 per cent), Algerian (10.4 per cent), Iraqi (9.8 per cent), Jordanian and Bahraini (both 6.6 per cent), Tunisian (4.4 per cent) and Saudi and Omani (both 0.5 per cent).

Study Results

This section presents the study results which aim at examining the attitudes of religionists, politicians, the media, journalists, writers, and political analysts towards the news coverage of Da’esh. Regarding Q1 whether respondents called Da’esh as a terrorist organization, the Table 1 shows that news bulletins present a lot of news and visual images about the armed organizations ‘Da’esh. This finding is in line with Qudah et al. (2016) found that Arab and Western news channels present 2.7 per cent of their news bulletins about Da’esh.

Table 1. Mean score and standard deviation of the first question

Agreement Degree	Standard deviation	Mean	Item
High	1.03	4.24	News bulletins present a lot of news and visual images about armed organizations called terrorist organizations. How much do you agree or disagree with the applicability of this title to Da’esh?

Q2: To what extent are you interested in television news about Da’esh?

Table 2. Extent of interest in Da’esh through TV news

Percentage	Yes/No	Variable/Degree
10	130	Weak
14.3	186	Mediocre
15.5	450	Big
60.1	534	Very big

As it appears in Table 2, the overwhelming majority of respondents were interested in the TV news of Da’esh. The results for the variable “very big” in first place were 60.1 per cent, and “big” as a variable occupied second place by 15.5 per cent, while the rate of interest for the weak variable came in last place with 10 per cent. This result is inconsistent with the results of Qudah (2008). The authors consider that this is due to several factors; most importantly the sample size, on the one hand, and society’s influence by this news, on the other hand. In addition, the news of Da’esh becomes the study public talk of the hour.

Q3: To what extent do you rely on the Arab and Western channels for Da’esh news?

Table 3. Dependency on Arab and Western channels in the coverage of Da’esh news

Percentage	Number	Per cent	Yes/Number	Variable/Channel
12.1	157	87.9	1,143	Arab news channels
15.6	302	84.4	1,098	Western news channels

As indicated in Table 3, the majority of respondents trust the news of Arab and Western news channels about Da’esh. Regarding the “yes” answer, 87.9 per cent pointed to the Arab channels, and 84.4 per cent for the Western channels. This is associated with a number of factors, most importantly the live transmission of images and sound news, which leaves no room for doubting the credibility and objectivity of this news.

The researchers believe that there is a psychological factor for the credibility of the news due to Da’esh’s inhuman and vile acts, such as murder, burning people and other methods of torture and killing, which made the sample members trust all news related to Da’esh.

Q4: Why do you follow the news of Da’esh on the Arab news channels?

Table 4. Reasons for following the news on Arab channels

Level	SD	Mean	Reasons for following Da’esh news
High	1.08	3.81	Knowledge and demystification of what Da’esh people do from different points of view
Mediocre	1.11	3.45	Finding objective explanations for what Da’esh is doing
High	1.01	3.92	The impact of what Da’esh is doing on the Arab region and the world
High	1.10	3.87	The tension Da’esh created in the Arab region and in the world
High	1.17	3.79	Fear of new war outbreaks as a result of Da’esh acts
Mediocre	1.22	3.00	The news helps me in my discussions with those around me

As shown in Table 4, the reasons for following the news of Da’esh on Arab channels is due to the effect of what Da’esh is doing in the Arab region and the world came in at first

ranking with a mean of 3.92, and the tension generated by Da’esh in the region and the world ranked second with a mean of 3.87. In third place, the reason for knowledge and demystification with respect to Da’esh and their acts from different views came in with a mean of 3.81; all of which are high.

Q5: Why do you follow the news of Da’esh on Western news channels?

Table 5. Reasons for following news on Western channels

Leve	SD	Mean	Reasons for following Da’esh news
High	1.09	3.78	Knowledge and demystification of what Da’esh followers do from different points of view
Mediocre	1.08	3.38	Finding objective explanations for what Da’esh is doing
High	1.04	3.90	The impact of what Da’esh is doing on the Arab region and the world
High	1.13	3.85	The tension Da’esh created in the Arab region and in the world
High	1.15	3.81	Fear of new war outbreaks as a result of Da’esh acts
Mediocre	1.23	3.06	The news helps me in my discussions with those around me

As shown in Table 5, the reasons for following the news of Da’esh on Western channels is due to the effect of what Da’esh is doing in the Arab region and the world came in the first with a mean of 3.90; and the tension generated by Da’esh in the region and the world ranked second with a mean of 3.85. In third place, came fear of new war outbreaks as a result of Da’esh acts with a mean of 3.81; all of which are high.

Table 6. Means and standard deviations of the sample responses on RQ6

Item	Mean	Standard deviation	Degree of agreement
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Arab satellite channels impartially cover Da’esh news?	2.82	1.3	Mediocre

Regarding RQ6 that asked respondents to what extent they agreed or disagreed that Arab satellite channels impartially covered Da’esh news activities. The mean score was 2.82 out of 5 (SD=1.3), which indicated mediocre agreement. This result is consistent with what Alshathry (2015) who found that *Al Jazeera* focused on the coverage of news, calling on the responsibility of Maliki’s government to be shown, and the Iraqi-Saudi dispute because of Da’esh. It also focused on the war in Syria and the conflicts on the Syrian and Lebanese borders in an attempt to create an irrational connection between these events.

According to Alshathry (2015), news coverage of Da’esh by *Al Jazeera* is characterized by superficiality and a lack of focus on important issues associated with the conflict, which affects the recipient’s understanding of many aspects of the conflict. Although experts in aviation, defense, and armaments said that these aircraft represent only junk in the air force market, that these aircraft are old and are more for training than fighting, and most importantly, that these aircraft need radar and technical teams on the ground which are not available, the news gave more media space to this issue, that this gives rise to the morale of the organization and attracts new fighters. This study is different from the study of Qudah et al. (2016) in which Arab academics view Arab satellite channels as unnatural

in transmitting Da’esh news stories by 2.82 per cent and by standard deviation 1.3. Cunningham (2003) confirms that objectivity is a myth and that the media presents the news in accordance with public standards and attitudes, especially when the event being covered affects the public directly. Cunningham argued that “journalists... must acknowledge, humbly and publicly, that what we do is far more subjective and far less detached than the aura of objectivity implies – and the public wants to believe. If we stop claiming to be mere objective observers, it will not end the charges of bias, but will allow us to defend what we do from a...less hypocritical position”(pp. 27-28).

Respondents were also asked to state whether they agreed or disagreed that Western satellite channels only partially covered news related to Da’esh (RQ7). Respondents more likely to agree on this item, with mean score of 2.97 and SD (1.5). It is apparent from Table 7 that the mean of the item related to question three is 2.97 and the standard deviation is 1.5. This result differs from those of Alshathry (2015) which showed that CNN focused on the struggle news and the relationship of Da’esh with Al Qaeda in order to understand the reasons that led to the explosions that occurred in the city of Mosul and link it with other events in the world which bear the hallmarks of Al Qaeda. Alshathry (2015) also pointed out that despite the fact that Da’esh news occurs in Iraq, CNN relied on U.S. official sources for its coverage in an attempt to settle the news coverage of a US news anchor. This procedure had an impact on the neutrality and credibility of the news coverage of Da’esh on the channel.

Table 7. Means and standard deviations for the items related to RQ3

Item	Mean	Standard deviation	Degree of agreement
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Western satellite channels impartially cover Da’esh news?	2.97	1.5	Mediocre

It is apparent from Table 7 that the mean of the item related to question three is 2.97 and the standard deviation is 1.5. This result differs from those of (Talal, p. 29, 2015) which showed that CNN focused on the struggle news and the relationship of Da’esh with al Qaeda trying to understand the reasons that led to the explosions that occurred in the city of Mosul and link it with other events in the world which bears the prints of Qaeda. Talal also pointed out that despite the fact that Da’esh news occurs in Iraq, CNN channel relied on US official sources for its coverage, in an attempt to settle the news coverage of a US news anchor. This procedure had impact on the neutrality and credibility of the news coverage of Da’esh on the channel.

CNN also focused on social networking sites and gave them importance in its news coverage of Da’esh in a way that promotes the organization, rather than relying on Arab sources and Arab officials (Zhang & Hellmueller, 2016). Al-Laban (2016) indicated that covering Da’esh’s news played a role in media *credibility* in channels such as France’s Press Agency, Reuters and CNN. The Western media sometimes show the dangers of Da’esh’s organization, reflecting negatively on the morale of the organization’s opponents. Such as the concern of the German intelligence agencies about the possibility of “Da’esh” and other groups having anti-aircraft weapons which can fly two miles. These results differ from the findings of Qudah et al. (2016) that Western channels were moderately neutral in their coverage at 2.9 per cent with a standard deviation of 2.97.

To test the hypothesis of this study the Independent t-tests were applied as following: no significant was found between gender and dependency on news from Arab satellite channels **H1** $t(2)=2.82$, $p=0.043$ and Western satellite channels **H2** $t(2)=2.91$, $p= -0.381$. This means that the data is supporting our hypothesis gender play role in dependency on news. The level of significant is higher than 0.05. A further step was performed using a one-way ANOVA test to determine any significant differences when data have more than two variables: **H3** and **H4** were supported which indicated significant differences between nationality and reliance on news from both Arab and Western news channels (Table 7) ($\alpha=0.05$). The data supported both **H5** and **H6** regarding the differences between age and dependency on news from Arab (Table 8) and Western satellite news channels (Table 9) ($\alpha=0.05$).

H1: There are significant statistical differences between sex and dependency on news of Arab satellite channels. To prove this hypothesis, the (Independent t-test) was applied to the item related to question 7 for sex, Table 8, illustrates this:

Table 8. Results of the application of the (Independent-T-test) on the item related to the first hypothesis

Sex	No.	Mean	St. deviation	t-value	Significance level
Male	791	2.82	1.32	0.043	0.96

It is clear from Table 8 that there were no significant statistical differences at ($\alpha=0.05$) of the item related to the first hypothesis for sex. This indicates rejection of the hypothesis that “there are significant statistical differences between sex and dependency on news of the Arab satellite news channels”.

H2: There are significant statistical differences between sex and dependency on news of Western satellite channels. To validate this hypothesis, (Independent t-test) was applied to the item related to the second hypothesis for sex, Table 9, illustrates this:

Sex	No.	Mean	St. deviation	t-value	Significance level
Male	805	2.91	1.48	0.381-	0.70
Female	497	3.00	1.56		

As shown in Table 9, no significant differences were found at ($\alpha=0.05$) of the second hypothesis related to sex. This indicates rejection of the hypothesis that “there are significant statistical differences between sex and dependency on news of Western satellite channels.”

H3: There are significant statistical differences between nationality and dependency on news of Arab satellite channels. To validate the hypothesis, one-way ANOVA test was applied to the item related to the third hypothesis for nationality; Table 10, illustrates this:

Table 10. Results of (one-way ANOVA) application on H3 for nationality

	Total squares	Means square	F. value	Level of significance
Between groups	87.453	4.858	3.337	0.00
Within groups	227.142	1.456		
Total	314.594			

It is evident from Table (10) that there are significant statistical differences at ($\alpha = 0.05$) of the item related to the seventh question regarding nationality. This indicates the acceptance of the hypothesis which states that “there are significant statistical differences between nationality and dependency on news of Arab News channels.”

H4: There are significant statistical differences between nationality and dependency on news of Western satellite channels. To validate the hypothesis, (one way ANOVA) test was applied to the item related to the fourth hypothesis for nationality; Table 11, illustrates this:

Table 11. Results of (one-way ANOVA) application on H4 for nationality

	Total squares	Means square	F. value	Level of significance
Between groups	118.729	6.596	3.542	0.00
Within groups	297.997	1.862		
Total	416.726			

It is evident from Table 11 that there are significant statistical differences at ($\alpha=0.05$) of the item related to the fourth hypothesis regarding nationality. This indicates the acceptance of the hypothesis which states that “there are significant statistical differences between nationality and dependency on news of Western news channels.”

H5: There are significant statistical differences between age and dependency on news of Arab satellite channels. To validate the hypothesis, the (one way ANOVA) test was applied to the item related to the fifth hypothesis for age; Table 12, illustrates this:

Table 12. Results of (one-way ANOVA) application on H5 for age

	Total squares	Means square	F. value	Level of significance
Between groups	11.272	2.818	1.614	0.17
Within groups	312.505	1.746		
Total	323.777			

As shown in Table 12, no significant statistical differences were found at ($\alpha=0.05$) of the fifth hypothesis related to age. This indicates rejection of the hypothesis which states “there are significant statistical differences between age and dependency on news of Arab satellite news channels.”

H6: There are significant statistical differences between age and dependency on news of Western satellite news channels. To validate the hypothesis, the (one-way ANOVA) test was applied to the item related to the sixth hypothesis for age; Table 13, illustrates this:

Table 13. Results of (one-way ANOVA) application on H6 for age

	Total squares	Means square	F. value	Level of significance
Between groups	15.19	3.800	1.653	0.16
Within groups	420.72	2.29		
Total	435.92			

As shown in Table 13, no significant statistical differences were found at ($\alpha = 0.05$) of the sixth hypothesis related to age. This indicates rejection of the hypothesis which

states “there are significant statistical differences between age and dependency on news of western channels.”

H7: There are significant statistical differences between profession and dependency on news of Arab satellite news channels. To validate the hypothesis, the (one-way ANOVA) test was applied to the item related to the seventh hypothesis for profession; Table 14, illustrates this:

Table 14. Results of (one-way ANOVA) application on H7 for profession

	Total squares	Means square	F. value	Level of significance
Between groups	22.442	5.610	3.396	0.01
Within groups	292.438	1.652		
Total	314.879			

It is evident from Table 14 that there are significant statistical differences at ($\alpha=0.05$) of the item related to the seventh hypothesis regarding profession. This indicates the acceptance of the hypothesis which states that “there are significant statistical differences between nationality and dependency on news of Arab channels.” These differences are in favor of communication professors.

H8: There are significant statistical differences between profession and dependency on news of Western channels. To validate the hypothesis, the (one-way ANOVA) test was applied to the item related to the eighth hypothesis for profession; Table 15, illustrates this:

Table 15. Results of (one-way ANOVA) application on H8 for profession

	Total squares	Means square	F. value	Level of significance
Between groups	10.528	2.632	1.131	0.34
Within groups	421.128	2.327		
Total	431.656			

Table 15 shows that that there are no significant statistical differences at ($\alpha=0.05$) of the item related to the eighth hypothesis regarding profession. This indicates rejection of the hypothesis which states that “there are significant statistical differences between nationality and dependency on Western channels.”

H9: There are significant statistical differences between place of residence and dependency on news of Arab satellite channels. To validate the hypothesis, the (Independent t-test) was applied to the item related to the ninth hypothesis for place of residence; Table 16, illustrates this:

Table 16. Results of (Independent t-test) application on H9 for place of residence

Place of residence	Number	Mean	Standard deviation	t- value	Level of significance
Villages and rural areas	161	3.30	1.40		
Cities	1092	2.71	1.29	2.063	0.04

It is evident from Table 16 that there are significant statistical differences at ($\alpha=0.05$) of the item related to the ninth hypothesis regarding place of residence. This indicates the acceptance of the hypothesis which states that “there are significant statistical differences between place of residence and dependency on news of Arab news channels.”These differences are in favor of place of residence (villages and rural areas).

H10:There are significant statistical differences between place of residence and dependency on news of Western satellite news channels. To prove the hypothesis, the (Independent t-test) was applied to the item related to the tenth hypothesis for place of residence; Table 17, illustrates this:

Table 17. Results of (Independent t-test) application on RQ8

Place of residence	Number	Mean	Standard deviation	t- value	Level of significance
Villages and rural areas	182	3.69	1.67	2.708	0.00
Cities	1099	2.83	1.47		

It is clear from Table 17 that there are significant statistical differences at ($\alpha=0.05$) of the item related to the tenth hypothesis regarding place of residence. This indicates the acceptance of the hypothesis which states that “there are significant statistical differences between place of residence and dependency on news of Western news channels.”These differences are in favor of the place of residence (villages and rural areas).

H11:There are significant statistical differences between social status and dependency on news of Arab satellite channels. To validate the hypothesis, (one-way ANOVA) test was applied to the item related to the eleventh hypothesis for social status; Table 18, illustrates this:

Table 18. Results of (one-way ANOVA) application on RQ7 for social status

	Total Squares	Means square	F. Value	Level of Significance
Between Groups	4.201	2.100	1.198	0.30
Within Groups	320.944	1.754		
Total	325.145			

As shown in Table 18, no significant differences were found at ($\alpha = 0.05$) of the item related to the eleventh hypothesis for social status. This indicates rejection of the hypothesis that states “there are significant statistical differences between social status and dependency on news of the Arab satellite news channels.”

H12: There are significant statistical differences between social status and dependency on news of the Western satellite news channels. To validate the hypothesis, (one-way ANOVA) test was applied to the item related to the twelfth hypothesis for social status; Table 19 illustrates this:

Table 19. Results of (one-way ANOVA) application on H12 for social status

	Total Squares	Means square	F. Value	Level of Significance
Between groups	1.075	0.537	0.230	0.79
Within groups	436.736			
Total	437.811			

As shown in Table 19, no significant differences were found at ($\alpha = 0.05$) of the item related to the twelfth hypothesis for social status. This indicates rejection of the hypothesis that states “there are significant statistical differences between social status and dependency on news of Western satellite news channels.”

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to provide information on the attitudes of the leaders of opinion towards the news coverage of Arab and Western channels, besides the war of regular armies in Iraq and Syria against terrorist organizations. Arab and foreign news channels focused on the news of terrorist organization, (Da’esh), in a way that contributed to the formation of the agenda of the Arab opinion leaders towards this organization, which showed interest and follow-up of the news coverage of the news channels. This interest of Arab opinion leaders can be traced back to Da’esh terrorism in the region and the world. Although Arab opinion leaders differ in the assessment of Arab and Western news channels in covering many issues, they view Western news channels as not neutral in covering the Palestinian cause (Cabour, 2010, p. 170). Arab news channels, however, are more reliable in covering terrorism issues than foreign channels (Mustafa, 2008, p. 94). Opinion leaders’ attitudes toward Da’esh’s news coverage were neutral, indicating that attitudes toward news coverage provided by the news channels are unstable among Arab opinion leaders. The researchers believe that attitudes of Arab opinion leaders towards covering news of Da’esh influenced by the general climate that rejects violence and the scene of death and slaughter, which were disseminated to the media. Thus, the media image contributed to the formation of opinion leaders’ attitudes towards (Arab and Western) news coverage more positively.

The study concluded that the formation of public opinion attitudes and opinion leaders in particular towards media coverage of important events is no longer related to the recipient’s relationship with the means. Rather, it is related to the geographic and human proximity factors, the specific interests of the recipient and the nature of the issue itself.

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